



Afternoon Alert - Thursday, July 27, 2017

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HEADLINES

Noon news

NHK and TV Asahi reported that former Moritomo Gakuen President Kagoike and his wife will soon be questioned by the police over allegations that they fraudulently obtained subsidies from the local government. NTV and Fuji TV gave top play to reports that North Korea may launch a ballistic missile today because it is the 64th anniversary of the Korean War armistice agreement. TBS led with a report that GSDF Chief of Staff Okabe is likely to resign to take responsibility for the cover-up of daily activity logs kept by the GSDF in South Sudan.

INTERNATIONAL

Special adviser Kawai agrees with U.S. senators to jointly increase pressure on DPRK

NHK reported at noon that Katsuyuki Kawai, a special adviser to Prime Minister Abe, met with Republican senators and others in Washington on Wednesday and agreed on the need for the U.S. and Japan to work closely and increase pressure on North Korea. Kawai was quoted as telling reporters after the meeting: "We agreed that we must remain as vigilant as possible against future moves of North Korea and that dialogue for the sake of dialogue is not acceptable."

Four Japanese citizens detained in China have returned home

NHK reported at noon that Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga told reporters this morning that out of the six Japanese citizens who were taken into custody by Chinese authorities in March, four were released and returned home on Thursday. "Out of the six Japanese nationals who were taken into custody in Shandong and Hainan provinces in March, four of them returned home on July 27," said Suga. "We are in contact with the Chinese authorities, but since the remaining Japanese are still in custody, I would like to refrain from providing details." Suga also reportedly said that protecting

Japanese nationals is the greatest responsibility of the government, and that the government will continue to provide support for the Japanese nationals who are still detained.

- [U.S. to punish Chinese firms that deal with North Korea](#) (The Asahi Shimbun)
- [4 Japanese detained in China released, arrive back in Japan](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Trump conducts foreign policy on the fly](#) (Yomiuri)
- [A-bomb training area to receive paper crane folded by Sadako](#) (The Asahi Shimbun)

OPINION POLLS

- [75% of South Koreans say Japan-ROK agreement did not resolve comfort women issue, Japan-South Korea Joint Public Opinion Poll](#) (Asahi)

POLITICS

Renho to step down as Democratic Party president

NHK online reported this afternoon that Democratic Party President Renho told her aides that she would like to step down as the party leader in order to revitalize the party. The network said although Renho has been making arrangements to reshuffle the party leadership following DP Secretary General Noda's announcement on Tuesday of his intent to step down in order to take responsibility for the party's loss in the Tokyo assembly election, she told her close aides today that she wishes to step down as the party leader. The network speculated that although Renho expressed her intent to run for a single-seat constituency in Tokyo in the next Lower House election and was hoping that her party would regain strength by reshuffling the party executive lineup, she decided to step down since the reshuffle proved difficult.

Most broadcasters carried live coverage of Renho's press conference held this afternoon in which she said she has decided to step down not for herself or her party but for Japan's democracy.

- [Renho announces resignation as main opposition Democratic Party leader](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Editorial: DP's policy line unclear following secretary-general's decision to step down](#) (The Mainichi)
- [Cartoon: Renho jettisons Noda](#) (Asahi)
- [Abe mulls replacing defense minister with old hand](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Abe's reshuffle will aim to push constitution and trade agenda](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)

- [LDP constitution panel to persist in debate to submit proposals to Diet on schedule](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Editorial: Diet debates fail to prove choice of Kake was 'a foregone conclusion'](#) (The Japan News)
- [Liberal LDP Lower House member Murakami predicting Abe's resignation this year](#) (FACTA)
- [LDP Secretary-General Nikai says "pay no attention to media"](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Prime minister's schedule on July 26, 2017](#) (Nikkei)
- [Cartoon: Distrust of Abe](#) (Sankei)

SECURITY

- [GSDF chief to resign over alleged coverup of activity logs](#) (Kyodo News)
- [MPD beefs up antiterrorism measures in waterfront areas for Olympics](#) (Mainichi Evening edition)

ECONOMY

- [Itochu wins Indonesian coal-fired power plant project](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Prospects for enactment of labor law dimmed by Rengo's withdrawal from merit pay system](#) (Yomiuri)
- [R&D budgets in Japan soaring to record-breaking levels](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [AI, IoT top Japan R&D chiefs' priority lists](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Japan to tap unapproved drugs in emergencies abroad](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Japan may tax foreign visitors to spruce up tourist sites](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Economic effects of Japan-EU EPA remain to be seen](#) (Shukan Toyo Keizai)
- [No one left to raise alarm over extreme policies on BOJ Policy Board](#) (Asahi)
- [Illegal long working hours detected at over 10,000 workplaces, MHLW](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Japan's average minimum wage should be raised to 848 yen per hour: panel](#) (The Mainichi)

- [Fisheries Agency asks pole-and-line operators to refrain from fishing for juvenile Pacific bluefin tuna](#) (Mainichi)

SOCIETY

Sagamihara massacre and hate crime

NHK's "Close-up Gendai+" continued its series of reports on the Sagamihara massacre one year ago, in which 19 residents of a facility for people with disabilities were killed by Satoshi Uematsu, a former employee of the facility. According to the network, hate crimes like this one are increasing in the U.S. and Europe.

California State University Professor Brian Levin explained in an interview that hate crime begins with a bias toward a certain group of people, which turns into discrimination against them, and escalates into justifying the removal of such people by violent means. Levin said Uematsu went through all of these stages, warning that bias, which many ordinary people feel in their daily lives, has the potential to lead to dangerous crimes. The program interviewed the mother of a man with intellectual disabilities, who said that although she cannot deny the difficulty of supporting people with disabilities, it is important not to look away from them and stressed that even though her son may not contribute to society in a positive way, she is just happy that he exists. The program said it is necessary to think about whether the lives of all people, including those with disabilities, are honored and respected in society.

- [Abuse of disabled workers trending downwards: labor ministry](#) (Kyodo News)
- [70% say environment for persons with disabilities has deteriorated, Kyodo News survey](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)